

STATEMENT OF ROBERT KNEIPP, ESQ., ASSISTANT CORPORATION
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INSPECTION—Resumed

H.R. 16948

Mr. KNEIPP. May I make a statement on behalf of H.R. 16948? The other day, the Mayor just briefly stated that the District favored the enactment of the bill—strongly favored the enactment of the bill, with amendments.

And the amendment is this, sir, the bill requires the District to tear down buildings that are found to be unsafe, and to remove the debris. But it also requires in clause two of both subsections that the District tear down a building that has been damaged if the owner requests to have it removed. There could be very minor damage.

Mr. WHITENER. As I understand it, the Commissioner in his letter recommends that there be an amendment to the effect that if the owner has been ordered to do so, pursuant to the Act of 1899.

Mr. KNEIPP. Yes; yes. If the bill be limited to tearing down unsafe buildings for reasons of health and safety, the District strongly believes it.

Mr. WHITENER. I do not believe that this Committee is recommending any type of building to be torn down. They are already tearing down new buildings around here. I just wish that we could prevent the destruction of good buildings so that we would not have that expense.

Although a building has been condemned—you are talking about a technical matter—so that it should not get out hand—all of the buildings that have been condemned or called unsafe would be such that they have already been inspected and passed on, or whatever is required; is that not so?

Mr. KNEIPP. I wonder if I could have Mr. William N. Dripps step forward on this. He is Superintendent of the Inspection Division of the Department of Licenses and Inspections. He has this knowledge.

Mr. WHITENER. Very well.

Mr. DRIPPS. Mr. Chairman, it is a pleasure to appear before the Committee. The buildings which would be covered under this bill have pretty largely already been served notices. I have to be a bit indefinite because we do not know the precise buildings involved at this time.

Mr. WHITENER. You do not know what buildings have been burned?

UNSAFE BUILDINGS

Mr. WINN. When I was going through the riot area, the two main areas, there were signs the first or the second day, about 8 x 11 signs.

Mr. DRIPPS. Yes, sir.

Mr. WINN. They were plastered along the streets, saying that this building is condemned, or something on that order.

Mr. DRIPPS. We put signs—that was one of the first things we did—was to put them on—we put unsafe notices against the buildings.

Mr. WINN. Do you have the addresses of all of those that you considered unsafe?